

G.H. Schodde

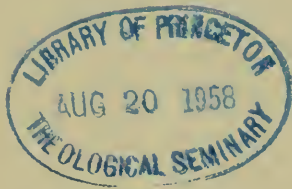
Problems of
Old Testament
Discussion

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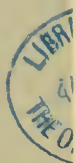
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The Lutheran Quarterly

ARTICLE II.

PROBLEMS OF OLD TESTAMENT DISCUSSION.

By Prof. GEORGE H. SCHODDE, Ph. D., Capital University, Columbus, O.

A combination of causes have conspired during the past decade, or more, to make the Old Testament rather than the New, the chief arena of theological controversy. The irrepres- sible conflict of modern theology between supernaturalism on the one hand and rationalism on the other, in the wider sense of these words; or, in other words, of the principle that the religion and revelation of the Bible are divine in their origin and character, and, on the contrary, that these must and can be explained only as the resultants of natural and human agencies and factors—this conflict in our own day and date has been transferred into the department of Old Testament research. Accordingly the animated and ever bitter debate that has been carried on and is still being carried on, has an importance not only for the problems immediately involved, but is fundamental for Biblical science as such and for the faith and confessions of the Church. If radicalism can gain the day in the present Old Testament discussions, it has thereby virtually destroyed the foundations of the Christian faith and Church. For in the interpretation, or rather misinterpretation of the Old Testament it seeks to establish hypotheses concerning the origin, character, and development of the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures, which, if once accepted as correct, can in the New Testament also, and hence in the whole complex of Christian doctrine, analyze into nothingness all the divine elements of the Christian faith. If the naturalistic scheme of Graf, Wellhausen, Kuenen, and others, according to which they make the religion of the Old Testament a purely natural product and in no part or portion a revelation from a source higher than what is human, could not be refuted and shown to be in antagonism with well authenticated facts, then too the New Testament, which historically

and theologically, according to the clear statements of Christ and the New Testament writers, stands upon the foundation of the Old, would with its foundation crumble to pieces. It is this feature of general and fundamental importance that has awakened for the Old Testament discussions of our day such a wide spread interest among clear-seeing men even if they are not specialists in this field. These considerations make it plain why the Old rather than the New Testament is the cynosure of all eyes in the theological world.*

*It may be that this sentence requires some limitation. Just at present the critical discussions in the New Testament department are being revived and advanced views are being taken with more assurance than has been the case at any time since the Tübingen school of Baur and Strauss was compelled to retire before the counter-charge of conservative and orthodox scholars. In fact, comparing the New Testament literature of 1886 with that of the Old Testament, we must say that negative criticism has been more active in the former than in the latter. Whether this only happened to be the case in 1886, or indicates a turn in the debate, remains yet to be seen. Two new Introductions to the New Testament have appeared, one by Weiss, of Berlin, with some conservative results scarcely expected from so prominent a representative of mediating theology; another from Holtzmann, which has already reached a second edition, and which is so "advanced" that it has left truth out of sight altogether, making quite a *tabula rasa* of traditional views and accepting little as authentic in the New Testament except the famous four Pauline Epistles. The greatest stir in this field has been made by the History of Apostolic Times (*Das Apostolische Zeitalter der Christlichen Kirche*), by C. Weizäcker, the successor of Baur, in Tübingen. While not quite so radical as his predecessor, he reaches conclusions almost equally subversive of the truth of history and revelation. Holtzsten, of Heidelberg, has published a new work on the synoptic gospels, with results that harmonize thoroughly with the old and refuted ideas of Baur. Does this mean a modern revival of the Tübingen criticism, just as the Wellhausen-Kuenen school is virtually a reproduction of the old and neglected views of George and Vatke? This note must not be understood as saying that the critics had not been at work on the New Testament also during the past few years. In fact, they have been hard at work, notably on the problem of the literary origin of the three gospels; but the discussions had been able to attract only the attention of the specialists, being overshadowed as far as the general public was concerned by the Old Testament problems. It may be that the two Testaments will divide the attention of the public.

In American circles also this controversy has attracted more attention than had been given to the contests of European critics heretofore. The ups and downs of advanced criticism in Europe had scarcely been even reported to the American public. It was not the Robertson Smith case alone that made this debate a burning question for America also, although this was the outward occasion for the outbreak of the controversy in our midst also. The theology of Germany has for decades back become a more and more potent factor in the formation of theological thought in America; nor has it always, or even generally been the best of German theology, older or modern, which has exercised this power. A large number of the younger American teachers of theology have been sitting at the feet of the famous professors in the German Universities, and brought over with them from the Fatherland both the good and the bad. While it is a matter of congratulation that so many young Americans seek the impetus and encouragement given them by the German schools, it is to be deplored that so many go there unprepared and not sufficiently ripe in heart and mind to be able to prove all things and keep that which is good; nor do they as a rule, stay long enough to understand even the theological tendencies in Germany. It is to some extent owing to this that the Old Testament discussions in our midst have assumed a more or less crude and fragmentary shape. On the other hand, it must be stated that a great deal of the controversy against Old Testament criticism is born of ignorance and blind zeal. Especially does the religious press often consider it its privilege to condemn before it has gone to the trouble of examining into the merits of the cause it criticises. Then what has not been brought over from Germany by young students has been scattered by the translations of German works. It is true that the majority of these works represent either the confessional school or the more orthodox of the mediating theologians, yet the radical critics also have found translators and readers. These and similar causes have united to bring problems to our doors of which otherwise we might have only heard vague rumors. But as they are here, and have come to stay,

(This is all the more probable as virtually the same problems are involved in both.

and are exerting a strong influence on the thought of the day and probably will exert a still stronger influence in the future, it is well for every intelligent Christian to secure as clear a view as possible of the questions involved, and thus be able intelligently and justly to take his position over against these problems and their real or pretended results. It is for this reason chiefly that we propose here to give a bird's eye view of the controversy, having in mind especially the needs of those who have not had the time or inclination to follow out the intricacies of the labyrinth of Old Testament criticism. The article is then not to be a new contribution to the solution of the problem, but merely a resumé of what has been done and what is further attempted.

In the nature of the case the Old Testament discussions will fall into three divisions, namely, lower criticism, higher criticism, and exegesis proper. The ultimate aim of all Biblical science is the interpretation of the Biblical text, the elucidation of the word of revelation, the drawing out of the truth which God has placed in the words spoken by the prophets and apostles. To do this three things are necessary; namely, first, we must have the exact words as they were spoken or written by the Biblical authors, and the process of attaining these is called lower or textual criticism; secondly, we must learn everything that can contribute to an understanding of this authentic text, *i. e.*, we must know, if possible, all about the author of a book, the time of its composition, the historical circumstances that surrounded its composition, its character and history as a literary work, &c., &c., and with this knowledge at our command seek to develop the meaning which the author under these surroundings had put into the text; which process is called higher, or sometimes, historical criticism; thirdly, the interpretation proper must then take place, which is called the exegesis of a passage or chapter or book. This natural division of the subject will give us the divisions for the discussion of the Old Testament problems, for they have not been confined to any one of the three or to any two of them.

The first point then is that of lower or textual criticism. All interpretation is bootless unless we have, as near as possible,

the *verba ipsissima* of the author under consideration. The object of exegesis being to extract the meaning of the words of another, the first prerequisite is to have these words in the form in which they were originally spoken or written. If any additions have been made by another hand, these must be cut out; if any omissions are found, they must be supplied, if possible; if any changes of any kind have been made in the text itself, these must, if possible, be rectified and the text restored to its original character. Classical philology has for centuries been engaged in this species of critical work. The acumen of the shrewdest minds has been devoted to the examination of the manuscripts of Homer, Zenophon, Thucydides, Cicero, Caesar, and other Latin and Greek authors, in order to restore to their original shape and form the literary remains of these classical writers. Out of the thousands of variants found in the different manuscripts, and with the aid of methodic and rational hermeneutical principles, critics have patiently labored on this text-critical work, with the result, that we undoubtedly have the texts of the authors in a more authentic and original form than the scholars of previous generations could boast of.

A similar method, only even more searchingly, has been applied to the New Testament text. In the scores of manuscripts of the Christian Scriptures the number of variants of all kinds found reaches, according to the excellent authority of Dr. Scrivener, the enormous sum of 150,000.* Of these, however, only about 400 materially affect the sense. The origin of these variants is not difficult to understand. We have none of the original copies of the New Testament books; the autographic copies of the evangelists and apostle have been lost. Our oldest manuscripts date probably from the fourth century, namely the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. In copying and re-copying the New Testament writings, error after error naturally crept in, error of sight, of hearing, &c., &c. Tregelles classifies the variations as omissions, additions, and substitutions of words or phrases. For our purpose it will suffice to make note simply of the fact,

*Cf. on the whole subject of New Testament Textual criticism, Schaff's Companion to the Greek Testament. 1883, p. 171 sqq.

that these variants do exist, and hence of the necessity of textual criticism to pick out from among these 150,000 variants those readings which, from current principles of criticism, we have reason to believe to have been the original words of the writers. Simply taking the text of this or that manuscript and pronouncing it the *Textus Receptus* was easy enough in an age when men did not study these problems, and did not do their own thinking in regard to the New Testament text. But now the work is more difficult, and the efforts of Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort, show that a text fully acceptable to all has not yet been established, although the tendency toward agreement is greater than ever.

In regard to the Old Testament the problem stood and stands practically as it does in the New. The centuries between the autograph of the original writers and the earliest manuscripts in our possession are considerably more than they are between Matthew's day and the Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, and consequently the chances for errors to creep into the text through mistake or carelessness of copyists was all the greater, or at least would seem to be so. The facts in regard to the New Testament have plainly shown that although God has inspired the writers to pen the truth, he did not in a miraculous manner preserve the original form of these writings and protect them against the same fate which the writings of other ancient authors were subject to in the course of centuries. The same must be said to be the case in regard to the Old Testament. It, as little as the New, has been exempt from those vicissitudes to which all the writings of antiquity were heirs. We need not hesitate to say that in the present shape of the Old Testament there are corruptions in the text. The word "corruptions" sounds harsh, and seems to convey the idea of intentional change on the part of the copyist. The technical meaning of the word in Biblical criticism is however of a more harmless nature. It simply means that there has been a change here or there from the original word or form as written or dictated by the original author. The Old Testament Canon closed about 400 B. C. (for we cannot accept the hypothesis of the origin of Daniel or of some of the Psalms in the Maccabean period), and our oldest Hebrew man-

uscripts date from the tenth, or earliest from the ninth Christian century. Accordingly there were thirteen or fourteen centuries between the original writing and the oldest copies of them in our possession. What was the fate of the text during these many years? It was copied again and again, undoubtedly hundreds, even thousands of times. If tens of thousands of variants could find their way into the New Testament in comparatively few centuries, did not a correspondingly greater number find their way into the Old Testament text in a period of perhaps three times its length and in a book three times the size of the New Testament? The probabilities are in favor of the affirmative to this question. That such corruptions did get into the text and that the Hebrew text as we have it now has its variants and consequently its errata, no honest student will doubt.* They actually do exist and it is suicidal to Christian scholarship to deny them, although we will say right here that as far as we have been willing to accept any as certain, they are even of less importance than the variants of the New Testament. But the expectations or fears that the Old Testament manuscripts will show up a larger number of variants than the New Testament MSS. did, are by no means realized. The existing manuscripts, on the contrary, show a remarkable agreement even down to minutiae, and the differences between them are few and insignificant. The voluminous comparisons of Hebrew manuscripts made by Kennicott in 1776-1780, who examined about 600 manuscripts and 40 of the old and more accurate printed texts,

*It will be impossible here to point out and illustrate the facts under this head. The student will find them easiest by reading carefully the historical books, especially Joshua and Samuel, as also Chronicles: Keil, the most conservative critic of the Old Testament in our day, in commenting on Josh. 8 : 13, acknowledges that there is a mistake here, as he does at a number of other places in the book of Joshua, and says (p. 86 of the English translation, note): "We need have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that there is a mistake in the number given in verse 3, as the occurrence of such mistakes in the historical books is fully established by a comparison of the numbers given in the books of Samuel and Kings with those in the books of Chronicles, and is admitted by every commentator."

and of de Rossi, 1784-1788, who examined many others, showed that all existing manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures substantially agree in their readings, which of course does not exclude the fact that there were quite a number of unimportant variants. The natural conclusion from these premises would be that this state of affairs shows a remarkable care on the part of the Jews in preserving the integrity of their sacred books. This supposition would receive support from the well known fact that special students of the Scriptures formed a leading class in Israel as early as Christ's day, and that later at the various schools at Babylon, Tiberias, Janina, and elsewhere the very iotas and titles of these writings were valued as gold, and the fruits of this minute study of the words of Scripture were laid down by these men, called Massorettes, in the Massora. So great is this agreement that even the so-called Codex Petropolitanus, published by Strock in 1876, which contains the so-called Babylonian punctuation, and represents a school of texts different from the ordinary Hebrew manuscripts, in the book of Ezekiel, according to the searching examination of Cornill, contains only sixteen real variants from the common Hahn edition of the Hebrew Bible.* This, however, is not the conclusion which more advanced investigators have drawn from these facts. Instead of accepting this as a proof of the superior character of our Hebrew manuscripts, they maintain that it is really a proof of their inferiority. The leading advocate of this thesis is Lagarde, one of the shrewdest scholars of this century. He says that "all our Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament are based upon one single copy [or prototype], whose very correction of mistakes in writing are faithfully copied as corrections, and whose imperfections they have adopted."† If this proposition is correct, then all our Hebrew manuscripts combined have for text-critical purposes the value of only a single manuscript. Lagarde's standpoint has been adopted by quite a number of scholars, Cornill going so far as to say that it is proved beyond a doubt. The proposition, however, is anything but proved; to

*Cf. Cornill, *Das Buch Ezechiel*, 1886, Prolegomena, p. 9.

†Cf. Lagarde, *Aumerkungen zur Griechischen Uebersetzung der Proverben*, 1863, p. 1 sq.

do this has never been attempted *in extenso* by any one. The character of the Hebrew manuscripts do not require such a strange, almost impossible theory, that they are all descendants from one parent manuscript from the days of the Emperor Hadrian, and the story which Lagarde unearthed out of an old Arabic Midrash of an archetypal copy from the siege of Bether, can scarcely be entitled to serious consideration. It would probably never have been brought forth from the tomb, if the substantial agreement of the Hebrew manuscripts were not such a disagreeable fact that it must be explained somehow without admitting the solidity and correctness of the Hebrew tradition of the text. The point *sub judice* is entirely too fundamental to admit of acceptance unless better substantiated than it is at present. But be this all as it may, the existence of certain corruptions in the Hebrew text is a fixed fact, and being a fact the textual criticism has its work to do for the Old as well as it has for the New Testament.*

Of course the next question in importance is as to the number and character of the corruption of the text. For we have an older Old Testament than the Hebrew, one that is itself at least thirteen hundred nearer to the close of the Old Testament canon and whose text is authenticated at least six hundred years earlier. We refer to the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Seventy. In many places the LXX. presents the same text as the Hebrew, as, *e. g.*, in the Pentateuch; in other places it deviates considerably, as, *e. g.*, in Daniel, Ezekiel, Job. The question accordingly arises which of the two is the better and more original text when they do not agree. The age of the LXX. as also the noteworthy fact that the New Testament throughout,

*That in the course of the centuries the Hebrew text did suffer changes of more or less importance, is acknowledged by the Massorettes themselves. When these literalists did their work on the Hebrew text, they found forms which they knew to be incorrect but which their reverence for the letter would not permit them to change. Accordingly they added the vowels of their corrections to the old consonants of the traditional text and added the consonants of their own suggestion and correction to the bottom of the page. Hence our *Q're and ktib*. The corrections of the Massorettes are, however, not always better than the traditional forms.

both Christ and the Apostles, quotes generally according to the Septuagint, and only exceptionally according to the Hebrew, *i. e.*, make a new translation from the Hebrew, would seem to indicate that the Septuagint as a whole has preserved the original text in its greater purity. It would however, be folly to jump to such a general conclusion. The Septuagint is a translation of very unequal merit, and then its exact character has not yet been settled, there being a number of recensions of it, and the original LXX. has not yet been restored. Accordingly nothing remains but to compare the separate passages of the LXX. with the Hebrew readings and then determine as soberly and cautiously as possible, which reading is critically the more correct, in case the two do not agree. It will be time enough to generalize when this patient but necessary work has been done. But taking facts as they are it is equally undeniable that in many places the Hebrew presents a better text than does the Greek, as also that in some places at least the Greek is better than the Hebrew. The first proposition will be readily yielded, and is proved by a mere reference to the translation of Job. The latter can be proved readily by a reference to the books of Samuel, though the superiority of the LXX. is claimed for others also. We can give here only one example to show how correct this proposition is. Between Joshua 15, 59 and 60, the Greek text inserts a fifth group of cities in Judah not found in the Hebrew text. This group embraces cities around Jerusalem, which are nearly all cities of importance, of fifteen of which the ruins have been found, and it is simply impossible that the writer of this catalogue should have omitted them from his lists. The omission in the Hebrew is readily explained, as the same word closes v. 59, and also the missing section, and the copyist took the latter for the former.*

The tendency now among text-critical scholars, especially in Germany, is to overestimate the literary and historical excellency of the Septuagint. This is wholly the cases in Lagarde, the *facile princeps* in this department, and his promising pupil, Cornill. The latter's critical edition of the text of Ezekiel,

*Cf. Keil, ad l.

published last year, is the only systematic attempt in late years on the larger scale, to put to practice what the text-critics have been preaching all along. He has done painstaking work, but he has so seriously modified the Hebrew text of the prophet, on the basis chiefly of the Greek, that he reduces the bulk of the text considerably. He has gone far beyond reasonable limits. A careful student of the O. T. text will take the Masoretic text as the basis, and if any changes are necessary, make them only when absolutely compelled to do so by the facts in the case. We have no doubt that when all the text-critical appliances that can justly be employed in the work have in a reasonable and correct manner been put to the Old Testament text, it will remain substantially the same as we have it now, although in many, possibly hundreds of cases, changes of lesser importance may be made. We are no prophet nor the son of a prophet, but it seems clear that Old Testament textual criticism will not demand such sacrifices as has New Testament textual criticism with its removal of the doxology in the Lord's Prayer, its rejection of the Trinity passage in St. John's Epistle, &c. In the nature of the case it cannot reach reliable conclusions of so radical a nature. Its work is more difficult than New Testament text criticism is. For it the MSS. are only of secondary importance, and the versions, the Septuagint, the Peshito, the Old Vulgate, the Targums, are the leading aids. It works with its own tools, and these are by no means as sharp as were those that cut off such chips in the New Testament text.*

As yet this whole discipline is in its infancy. This was clearly shown to be the case at least in America by the discussions following the appearance of the Revised Version of the Old Testament two years ago. Specialists and scholars in this department are not yet perfectly agreed as to the correct principles and the proper methods that should control these researches. The science is yet groping and in a tentative state. But lower criticism has a great work to do, to restore in every particular the *ipsissima verba* of the revealed word. For that

*The whole matter of Old Testament text criticism is discussed fully, ably, but from a somewhat radical standpoint, in the excellent *Prolegomena* to Cornill's Edition of Ezekiel.

reason even the most conservative of conservatives should encourage its efforts.

The next step in the critical process is to examine, in the light of all aids that can be brought to bear upon the subject, the text which lower or textual criticism has confirmed or corrected. This is called by that much misunderstood and maligned term of "higher criticism." The idea is often met with, that a higher critic is one who thinks himself endowed with higher acumen and wisdom than the ordinary man, by virtue of which he can analyze and argue the word of truth out of existence. No more foolish blunder could be made. Higher criticism consists simply in taking a Bible text, and focusing on it all the rays of light that a knowledge of the author, his time, the character of the composition, the historical background of the composition, in short, all the external and internal aids that can possibly be secured, and in the illumination thus secured to examine into the length, breadth and depth of a passage or book. It is the same literary process to which the classical student resorts if he would interpret his Homer or Cicero thoroughly. Higher criticism has been practiced by the Church from the beginning, and is practiced by all, and must be practiced, if exact and respectable Bible work is to be done. Never has there been a more sweeping piece of higher criticism seen than was practiced when the Church of the Reformation threw away, as being not a revelation of God, the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. Professor Greene, of Princeton, the most conservative Old Testament scholar in America, is as much a higher critic as are Professors Wellhausen and Kuenen. *Abusus non tollit usum*, and higher criticism, properly employed as the handmaid of faith, is one of the noblest of theological disciplines, as it arrives at the elucidation of the truth of God's revelation. It may have produced hay and stubble in abundance of late years, but it has also brought forth gold and silver. If neological and rationalistic theology has laid claim to a monopoly in this field, it is the duty of orthodox and conservative seekers for the truth to prove that they have not lawful claims to this. A fair and honest search for truth can only confirm it; if others have not been

fair in their researches, it is the duty of believing scholars to hold up their unfairness to merited rebuke.

The starting point and key-note of higher criticism in its modern phase, in so far as it is a subject of controversy, is the literary analysis of the Pentateuch. When in 1757 the Roman Catholic professor and physician Astruc published his hypothesis that the peculiar use made in Genesis of the words *Elohim* and *Jehova* for God indicated that Moses had used a number of literary documents in the composition of the book of Genesis, he set a little ball rolling that has now become a critical avalanche, covering the whole Old Testament. The discussion as to the literary analysis of Genesis, and then of the other books of Moses, and then of the Hexateuch, *i. e.*, the Pentateuch including Joshua, has been going on steadily ever since. In Germany and Holland, where men have been engaged in this work the most, a substantial unanimity of opinion has been reached. As far as we know of Professor Keil, in Leipzig (*not* connected with the University there) and Bachmann, of Rostock, are the only scholars who do not accept the documentary theory as a fixed result of the investigations of more than one hundred years. Many in England, as Driver, Robertson Smith and others, and some in America, as Briggs, Toy and others, also accept the analysis. With regard to the analysis itself there is also a somewhat remarkable agreement among scholars who occupy otherwise the most opposite position. Delitsch, Sr., of Leipzig, divides the Pentateuch into virtually the same elements that Kuenen accepts, although the former is a humble believer in the truth of revelation, the latter is a rabid rationalist. They believe with analysts in general, that the Hexateuch is composed of a Jehovistic document, combined with an Elohist one, and found chiefly in the historical portion of Genesis and Exodus; then the famous Priest Codex, or Levitical work, containing the whole Levitical system, and found chiefly in the last chapters of Exodus, the whole of Leviticus, and the opening chapters of Numbers, but represented also in the historical records of Genesis and Exodus; then the legal portion of the book of Deuteronomy. All these elements were worked together and combined by an editor. Critics claim to be able to

distinguish in nearly every case to which source this or that chapter or verse is to be attributed. It is represented, that Hebrew historiography, differing from Indo-European, does not take the sources of information and work them up in the language of the author, but merely takes extracts from these sources and places them side by side in their original form, but seldom changing a form or word. In this way an historic mosaic is produced, the various blocks in which can easily be recognized. The question of an analysis of the Pentateuch is one of fundamental importance for an appreciation of the Old Testament problem of the day. In many circles it is considered as a tradition of criticism that no longer requires any proof. No one who has not examined the books of Moses word for word in the light of the claims offered by the analysts can form any idea of the plausibility of the argument advanced. For it would be silly to reject in advance the possibility of such an analysis as heterodox or not permissible. Even as the supposition that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch as we have it now, it is still possible, and even probable, that in the composition of the Genesis he made use of older documents, which the inspiring spirit taught him how to utilize. Indeed the Pentateuch does quote at least one older book, the Book of the Just. Nor is it impossible that of these sources which Moses may have used, the one employed the name of Elohim for God and the other Jehovah. A sneering rejection of an Elohist or Jehovistic writing is simply an indication of ignorance and prejudice. The question is simply one of literary research. Do the facts as presented in Genesis, or in the other books of the Pentateuch, warrant the assumption that we have combined in them a number of older documents or sources? No doctrine of inspiration, however stringent or orthodox, can decide this question. The facts alone must do it. In regard to the books after Genesis the problem is somewhat different. It seems as though a rejection of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch could not be avoided if the documentary theory is accepted here. It is barely possible to unite the two, but it is hard work. But a question much discussed is whether the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, as this first expression in the latter books of the Old Testament

and in the words of Christ and of the New, really means that Moses is actually the writer of every word of the Pentateuch in the present shape and form of the books. There are many reverent students of God's word who claim that a fair exegesis does not hold out the affirmative; that Moses was indeed the great and original lawgiver, but that this does not exclude the possibility that God may later have given other laws which were added to the Mosaic code and formed one body with it. Whether the point is well taken or is merely a *Notbehelf* to give the analysts of the later books a Scriptural foothold is hard to say. If it is once clear that Christ really teaches that the lawgiver Moses is actually the literary author of the whole Pentateuch in its present shape, then the question is settled for every true Christian scholar. The Master has spoken and human wisdom must be silent. He is, if not a *doctor criticus*, at any rate a *doctor veritatis*. The natural interpretation of the New Testament would seem to bear out the position that He does teach the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; hence the *onus probandi* is on the shoulders of those who deny this. It is recognized to be so too, at least silently by the fact that they are the party who consider it their duty to prove that they are in harmony with the New Testament. But the matter cannot be decided hastily. It takes patient scholarship and prayerful faith to come to a satisfactory conclusion; and he will be the slowest to condemn those opposed to him who is best acquainted with the facts in the case and feels the deepest interest in and reverence for the true authority of God's holy word. That the traditional view concerning the authorship or age of this or that book of the Bible must be correct, cannot be asserted *a priori*. The possibility of error must be admitted. The Church before the Reformation for more than one thousand years was fully convinced that the Apocrypha were the revealed words of God. The reformers showed by research and argument that this was not the case. In Galileo's day the standard interpretation of the day claimed that the Bible taught that the earth was the centre of the solar system. A renewed examination showed that the Bible made no such claim, and that current opinion was

in error. And thus too from the very outstart a general denial of every view in Isagogics differing from the traditional is neither reasonable nor just. Accordingly the claims of higher criticism in this regard is entitled to a respectful hearing. In whatever point they are wrong they can there be refuted.

But when the next step is taken and on the basis of an analysis of the Pentateuch, the attempt is made to reconstruct the history of Israel's religion and worship, the leading scholars are sorely divided against each other. They cannot agree as to the historic order and the age to which the various elements of composing the Pentateuch are to be assigned and hence not on the religious scheme of which they are the exponents, although other factors also than the mere analysis of the Pentateuch enter into the construction of this scheme. The great critical question is as to the age of the Priest-Codex, containing what may technically be called all the entire legal features of Mosaism. Up to a comparatively recent period, it was the general consensus of scholars that it was the oldest of the Pentateuchal documents, and that accordingly a developed Levitical system stood at the head of the theocratic development. Of late the leading advanced men in this line have turned this matter squarely around, and affirm that the Levitical system is the *latest* in the growth of religious thought in Israel, dating the Priest-Codex even as late as the exile or Ezra. The ostensible reason for this revolutionary procedure is the *argumentum ex silentio*. It is a well known fact that in the pre-exile age, even in the days of the high religious development under David and Solomon, the ideals of the Mosaic law were not realized, but that even men of God, like Samuel and David, and this too with the seeming approval of Jehovah, acted contrary to the clear and explicit commands of the Levitical law, as, *e. g.*, in their sacrifices. From this it is argued that this law could not have been in existence at the time of David or Samuel. The facts in the case are undeniable, but the logic is seriously at fault. An *argumentum ex silentio*, uncorroborated by other evidences, proves nothing. On the same line of proof we could argue that the Pharisees in Christ's day did not have the Old Testament and that the Romish Church in the sixteenth century did not possess the Bible,

as in both cases confession and life were notoriously in conflict with these books.

But the controlling factor in the construction of the new religious scheme is rather the philosophical idea of natural development. According to Kuenen's own statements, he recognizes in Christianity and Judaism, two very important religions, nothing less but also nothing more. In kind and essence they differ nothing from the religions of other people. Hence in origin, character and development the Old Testament religion is purely naturalistic, and in no wise the result of a revelation from God. When the facts of the Old Testament will not bend to this hypothesis, the critics break them. It would take a cyclopædia of a half dozen volumes to mention and criticise the methods, destructive of facts and of logic, by which such an hypothesis is made to agree with the Old Testament records. The records, by hook or crook, must fit into this philosophical Procrustean bed.

Over against this revolutionary reconstruction conservative scholars have been building on almost the same literary basis, *e. g.*, virtually the same readjustment of the records of the Old Testament books. Even Delitzsch accepts the Levitical code as the latest in the complex of the Pentateuchal law, but places it at a much earlier date. Others still insist upon the priority of this code to the others. The conservatives to a man acknowledge the divine element in the religion of the Old Testament and is the revelation of this religion, modifying their scheme of the growth of this religion by their attitude toward the Pentateuch problem. Not one though who has written on the subject of this religious growth, as far as we know, places the *whole* Mosaic law at the head of this religious development. In nearly every case the prophets are made the centre of this religious growth, both internally and historically, and the unfolding of the ideas of this religion placed in relation to this. Thus, to cite the latest conservative writer, Dr. Schultz, in *Zöckler's Handbuch der theol. Wissenschaften*, Vol. I. divides the Theology of the Old Testament (and naturally also its history) into the theology of the ante-prophetic period, of the prophetic period, and of the post-prophetic period. As for the positive religious contents of the Old Testament these conservative re-

productions do not stand behind the traditional expositions; indeed, at places, by readjusting a book to its correct historical surroundings they enable us to see in even more wonderful beauty and transparency the gracious plans of Jehovah. Many, possibly the most of American scholars will not agree with the critical standpoint of Brigg's Messianic Prophecy, yet no intelligent reader of that book will deny, that from his standpoint many an Old Testament passage receives a richer meaning than we had been accustomed to put into it.

While thus the Pentateuchal problem has been overshadowing all other Old Testament discussions, both for good and for evil, other riddles of scarcely less difficulty must be met by the student of higher Biblical criticism. We can barely mention them here, recalling to mind only the questions as to the author and age of Isaiah 40-66, of certain chapters in Isaiah, of the age of Joel, of the age and author of Daniel and the close of the Old Testament Canon, of the existence of Maccabean Psalms. All of these and many others have been and are yet being discussed. No doubt many dangerous views have been expressed and much harm done. But truth has also been the gainer. In the very nature of the case truth *must* eventually gain the victory, whatever be the seeming temporary defeats. Otherwise we would have to lose our faith in truth and in the God of truth as the controlling power in the history of his Church. *Magna est veritas et praevalabit.*

Of the third and final work of the Bible student, although the most important, we need say little or nothing here. In the exegesis of passages and books, the principles of the various schools that appeared antagonizing each other already in the preliminary work also appear. Commentaries from the standpoints of the various schools have been and are being written, from the pronounced confessional and traditional standpoint on the one hand, to the outspoken rationalistic on the other, with many shades and shapes of compromising thought between. *Fas est ab hoste doceri*, and there can be no doubt that the controversies between the schools have improved our conservative commentaries also. But owing to the peculiar problems of the

hour many of these do not devote their strength so much to the unfolding of the thoughts of revelation, but rather to the preliminary literary and isogogical problems as also to outward features such as chronology, geography, &c., which are made the objects of attack by the destructive critics of the day. For this reason many of the older commentaries remain the best to our day for the explanation of the text itself. In this regard we do not think that Luther's Genesis has been surpassed (although he may put a little too much of the New Testament into the Old) nor Vitranga on Isaiah, nor perhaps Calvin's Commentaries on the historical books of the Old Testament. The literary activity in all these departments of Biblical research is being vigorously pushed, and a calm observer cannot fail to observe that the conservative tendencies are constantly gaining ground all along the line. When the struggle is over, there will be a substantial victory of truth to record, and a renewed vindication of the Bible as the word of revelation from God to man, given to teach him the way to salvation and eternal life.

ARTICLE III.

PROHIBITION.

By REV. H. C. HAITHCOX, A. M., Ashland, O.

Does Prohibition prohibit? Yes—No! Such are the answers given by the living voice, by written and printed testimony, and by the facts of the case. Does God's law—"Thou shalt not bear false witness," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not covet"—prohibit? Yes—No! Yes, where the head and the heart, the religious and moral sentiments are right; no, where they are not right. In other words, where the religious sentiment is right God's prohibitory law prohibits, where it is not right it does not prohibit. It is just so with civil law. Where the sentiment toward government is right, the prohibitory law of government prohibits, and where the sentiment is wrong, it does not prohibit. Does Prohibition in Maine, in Kansas, in

Iowa, in Georgia, prohibit? Yes, where the sentiment concerning the law is right; no, where that sentiment is not right. This explains the contradictory voices we often hear, and those contradictory reports we read. Making due allowance for the color that may be given those answers by the wish that may beget and clothe the thought, prohibitory law from God and man depends for its effectiveness upon man's sentiment concerning it. Whatever the theory of law, whether it be human or divine, whether right or wrong, this is the stubborn fact that faces us. And in this country, in this government of the people, the law must have respect to the popular sentiment if it would not be a dead letter. Ordinarily a few persons cannot voice a law and make it effective unless it echo the voice of the people.

Now here is a law called Prohibition. Two or three States have adopted it. The many States have not. But in all the States there are citizens in favor of it. The question is, How many? Are the majority in favor of it? Whatever our opinion, we do not know. How find out? Until a majority are manifestly for it, it cannot become the law of the States. How get this majority? Or, if it already exist, how make it appear? If it does not exist, how create it? Thus the question of Prohibition, as before the people now, is a question of method rather than of right. The question of the right of Prohibition belongs to the past. Ever since the days of Chief Justice Taney, of Maryland, the right of Prohibition has been taught by the State. All legislation against the liquor traffic is prohibitory in character. I dare say we all believe in the principle of Prohibition—the prohibition of all wrong, against Cæsar or against God. “The law was added because of transgression.” Why? To prohibit the transgressor from doing that which is hurtful to self or to another. Now the question is one of quantity and of method—how much Prohibition do we want? How get it?

Then, first, how much Prohibition do we want? There are two answers to this question. One is given from the stand-point of a prophet of God, the other from the stand-point of a prophet of the American people. The latter says: We want all the prohibition that will be for the public good. In our country the majority are the law-makers—the majority are the public. They



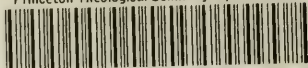
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Problems of Old Testament discussion

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